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A PAINTER OF MARINE SUBJECTS.

BY JNO. GILMER SPEED.

(*With original illustrations by James G. Tyler.*)

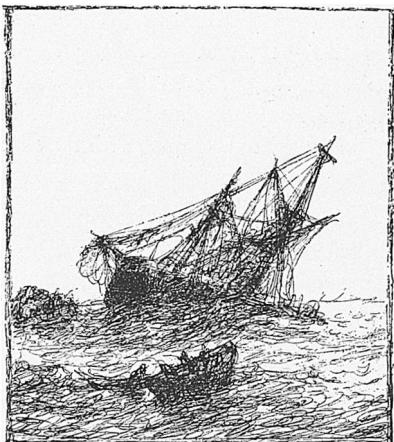


"SUNSET GUN."

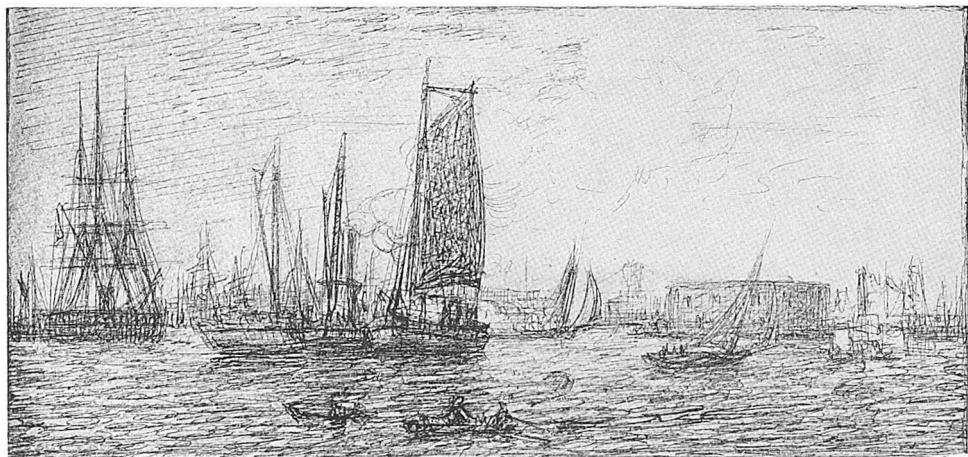
WHEN an artist has enthusiasms, and the courage of them, he is likely to get a good deal of happiness out of his art "whatever woe betide." When these enthusiasms, and the following of them, lead to success, the artist thus possessed and thus guided is to be envied among men. This reflection has been suggested by the work and the personality of James G. Tyler, the well-known marine painter, for both the man and his pictures are alive with enthusiasms which will not be denied, but on the contrary are apt to become contagious.

He paints in just the way he thinks he ought to paint, without refer-

ence to what critics may say and other artists think, and he speaks out his mind with a manly freedom which seems to count silence as cowardly. One of his friends, commenting on this characteristic in reproving tones, said, "Jim talks too much!" Fortunately for those who come within his circle, Mr. Tyler does not agree with this friend, and therefore his acquaintances are not denied the pleasure and the profit of the thoughts of a mind all untrammeled. Such characteristics can only be accompanied with



"ABANDONED."



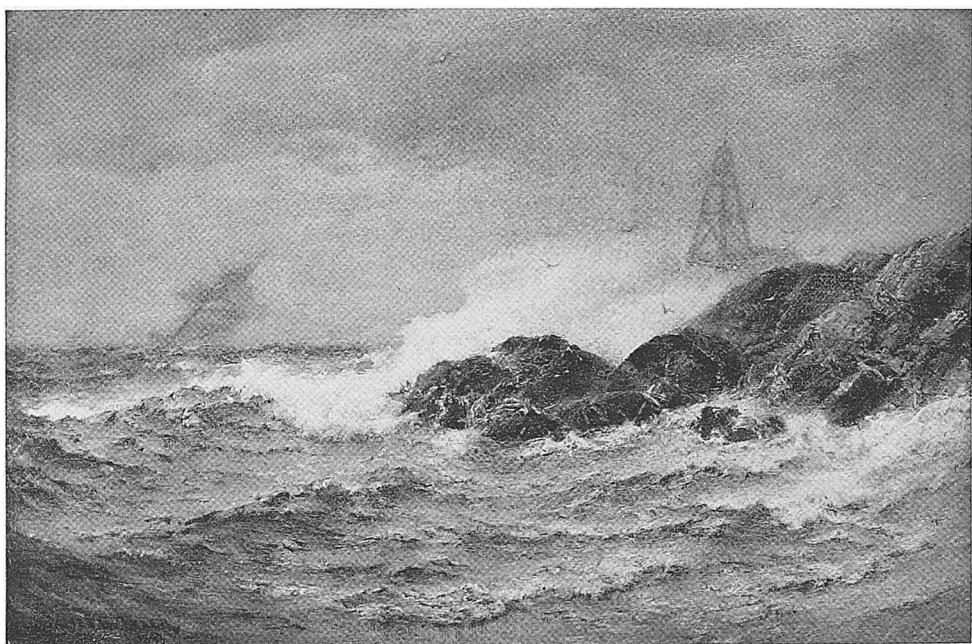
"IN PORT."

great sincerity. In Mr. Tyler's case we have not only courageous enthusiasms and frank sincerity, but genius as well, and, therefore, both the man and his work are potent with charm. So much of the space allotted to this article is wisely given up to the reproduction of Mr. Tyler's pictures and sketches that it is not possible for me to enter into any discussion of the merits of his work. Through these reproductions, however, his pictures speak with an eloquence that no writer could command. Therefore, I shall be content to say a few words about the man himself and his career as an artist.

Mr. Tyler began painting in 1870, when he was fifteen years old. He was then living in his native Oswego. He gained some little local fame before he had been at work a year, and when a



"A TEN-KNOT BREEZE."



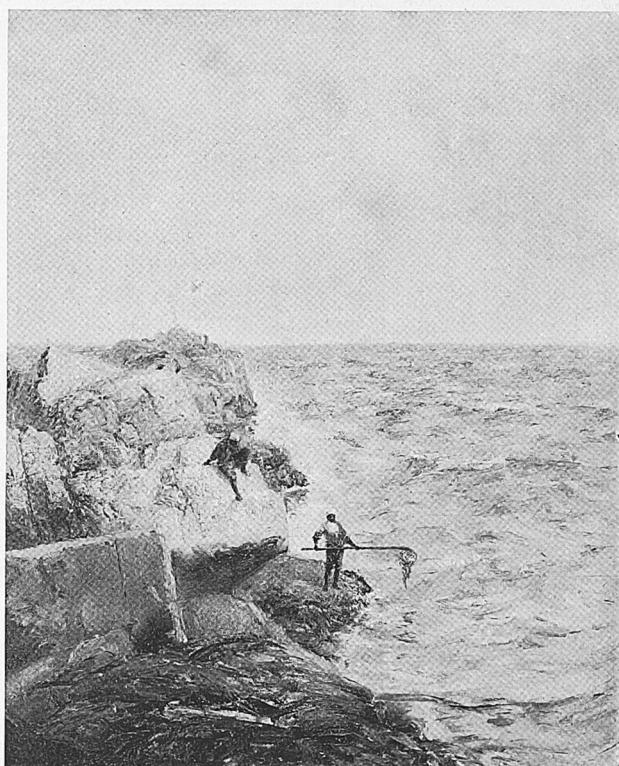
"ROUNDING CAPE ANN."



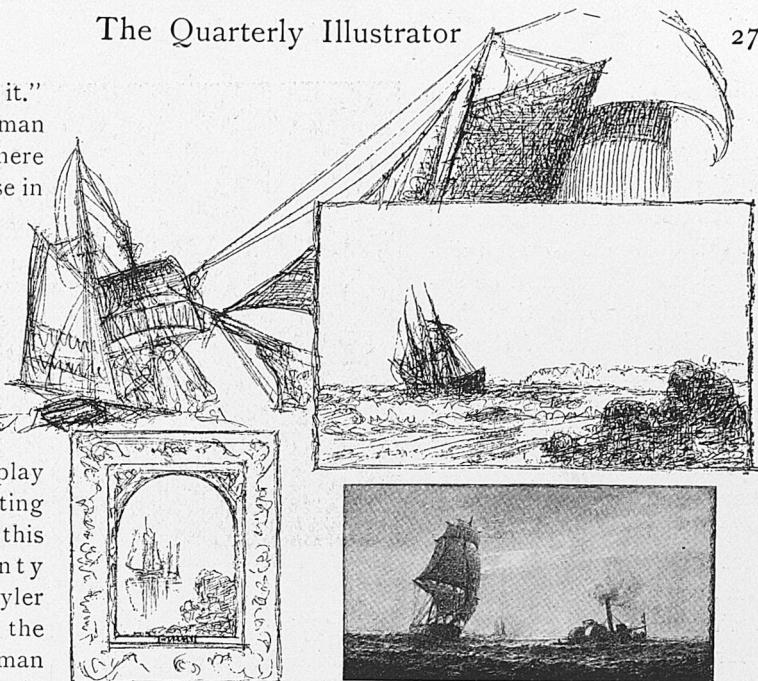
"GREETING A STRANGER."

member of the National Academy visited the town he was taken to see the youthful celebrity. This Academician, though a man of genuinely well-earned fame, is not a handsome man in the eyes of strangers, nor does he clothe himself with any degree of smartness. His fame had not reached young Tyler's studio, and the man himself did not look in the least as the boy artist thought an Academician should look. The elder and somewhat shabby man looked at the lad's canvas through his glasses and said kindly: "Your boat moves, my boy, but your clouds

should move with it." The young man thought that there was a deal of sense in the comment, but at the time he was suspicious that a joke was being played upon him, and that a casual tramp had been pressed into service to play the part of visiting Academician. At this day, some twenty years later, Mr. Tyler is not sure that the shabby gentleman who called on him in Oswego is not the ablest of all American landscape painters. The writer is tolerably sure that he is. At all events he has many admirers.



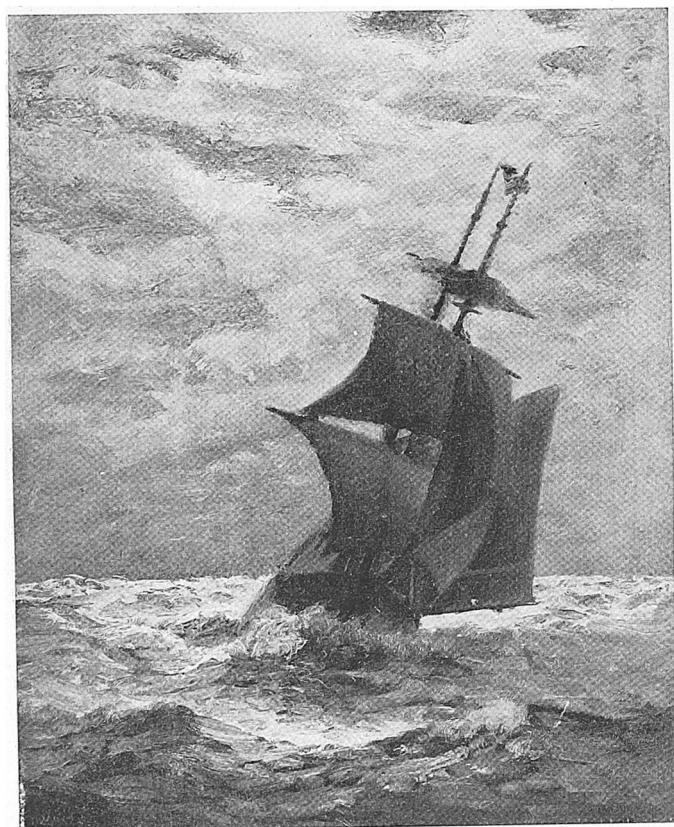
"THE BREAKWATER."



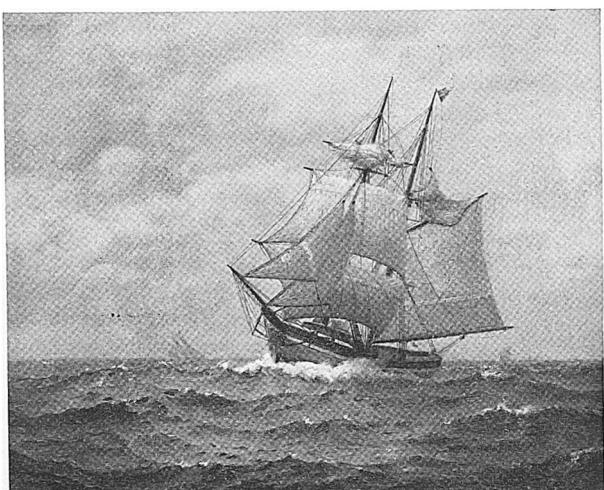
The next year Mr. Tyler painted about three months in the studio of A. Cary Smith, then well known as a marine painter, though at present he has deserted the pictorial art to be a designer of yachts. This is the only instruction Mr. Tyler has ever had save that which he has given himself. And to himself he has been a hard and exacting master, for never yet has he produced a work that was to himself entirely satisfactory. Recognizing, however, that what he did was as good as he at the time had power to make it, he has given his works to the world with a clear conscience.

Mr. Tyler, like Mr. Albert Ryder, for whom, by the way, he has a very warm

admiration, paints from his imagination, and his imagination should be spelled with a big I. He, therefore, escapes the commonplace, and in this achieves no mean distinction. It must not be understood by this that Mr. Tyler is a painter of the uncanny. It is true that in an exhibition at the Academy a few years ago he had a picture of the "Flying Dutchman," and Mr. Ryder, by the way, treated the same subject for the same exhibition. But even in putting on canvas such a baffling subject as this, Mr. Tyler was equal to the occasion, and came near to satisfying the very severest critics who were gifted with any imagination. It was most interesting at this exhibition to contrast the conceptions of Ryder and

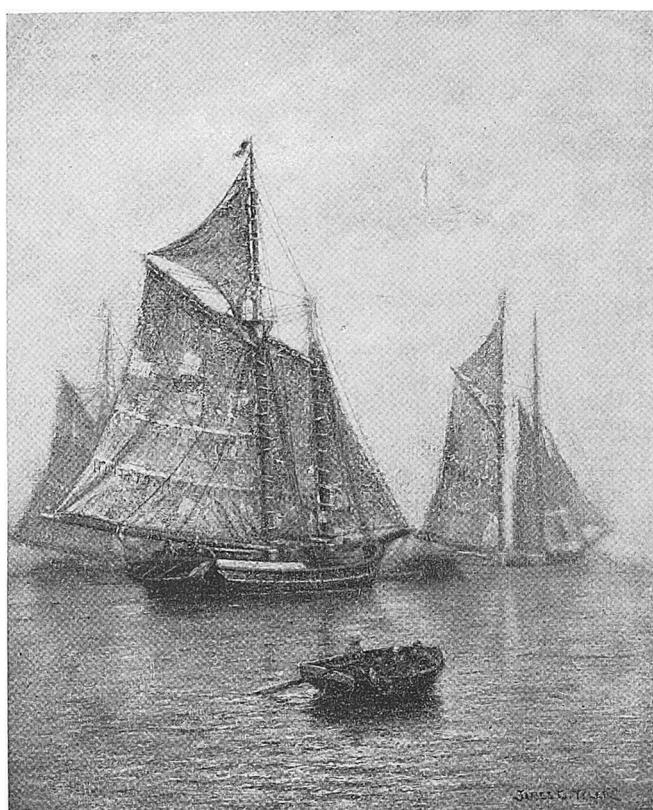


"A BRIGANTINE."



"A BRIGANTINE."

Tyler and their methods of treatment. The opinion of connoisseurs was about equally divided, and of critics as well. This was without doubt Ryder's masterpiece, and Tyler has said with characteristic frankness that he greatly preferred it to his own. Tyler's was a study in gray, the phantom ship half revealed in a bank of fog; Ryder's phantom ship was seen in a blaze of glorious color. Both were poetical, both were satisfying. Mr. Tyler's masterpiece, according to his own judgment, is a painting recently finished, and called "The Dawn of the New World." This picture is the result of much hard work and study. It is an effort to represent



“BECALMED.”

there are unfortunately not many now there worthy of national ownership.

Mr. Tyler is an impressionist, and sacrifices nothing whatever to the finicky detail upon which many realists waste all their time and power. Painting from within himself, instead of copying merely that which he sees, it is only natural that he should frequently produce results incomprehensible to those who have no head above their eyes. But this lack of appreciation, manifested now and again by hanging committees, bothers Mr. Tyler not in the least, for he feels that it is his mission in life to paint his own pictures in his own way ; to please himself and satisfy his own sense of beauty, and what Carlyle called “the eternal verities,” without reference to a few busy nobodies who have elbowed themselves into place and authority for the sake of the cheap fame which passes almost as soon as it has come.

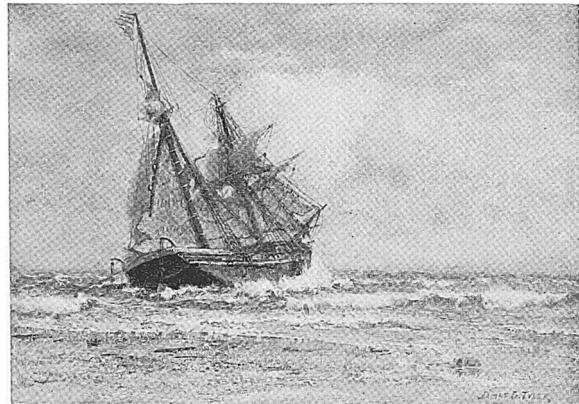
the little fleet of Columbus just as land is discovered. Mr. Tyler made this picture before the Columbian caravels had been built, and he needed to find his models in the old records. He has succeeded most admirably, and in this picture there seems to be a happy combination of the real and the ideal. Without this combination, probably no picture is quite worth while to be made. It would be a pity for such a picture as this to be buried in some private collection, and it is to be hoped that the movement to secure it for the Capitol at Washington will be successfully pushed. There is room in that great pile for many pictures, but



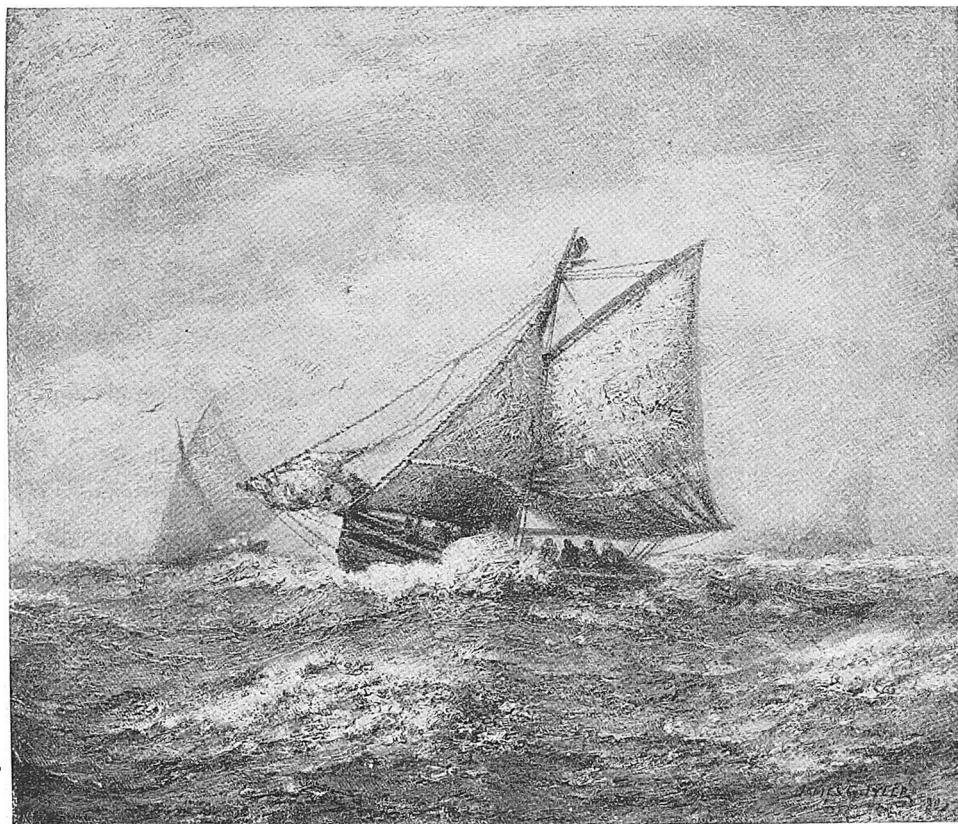
“AMPHIBIANS.”

When Mr. Tyler sees his own picture rejected, and the half-finished offering of his pupil hung upon the line, he merely laughs and sells his own canvas for five hundred dollars or so. He has his money, and his sustaining enthusiasms remain with him always. These enthusiasms would go far toward making Mr. Tyler happy with his lot, even though he had to do without very much of the money. Not that he despises money—not at all. Even

though gifted with an imagination that soars and soars in newer atmospheres, and sails and sails on undiscovered seas, he is too human to despise money, though he confesses freely that he has hated to have to make many of the pot-boilers to which he has signed his name. Fortunately for him and for his art, the pot-boiling era has been passed.



"ASHORE."



"DUNRAVAN FISHERMAN."